

Targeted Support for Local Schools

Mission

To provide students, parents, and school corporations with specific assistance to ensure that children and schools with particular educational needs and circumstances have the opportunity for success in education.

Summary of Activities

The state provides funding for a number of programs that target students having specific additional educational needs. These include programs for English language learners, summer school, gifted and talented, early intervention, technology, and ISTEP+ remediation.

State appropriations allow for testing all students in Grades 3, 6, 8 and 10 to ensure progress toward mastery of the Indiana academic standards in English/language arts and mathematics. During the 2003-04 school year, the ISTEP+ program will include science testing of Grade 5 students and will also include pilot testing for Grades 4, 5, 7 and 9 in English/language arts and mathematics. During the 2004-05 school year, the English/language arts and mathematics exams will be administered to all students in Grades 3-10. Annual testing will ensure compliance with P.L. 221 and the No Child Left Behind Act.

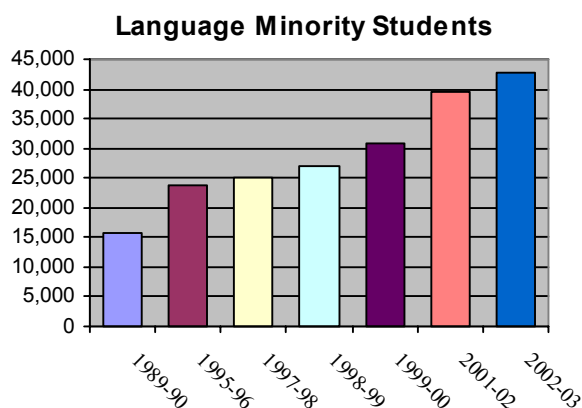


Assessment results have enabled the Department and policymakers to disaggregate performance data and evaluate the student achievement gap that exists in Indiana. One area where an achievement gap exists is with the growing population of language minority students throughout the state. More than 35 percent of those students who identify their ethnicity as Hispanic have been identified as having limited English proficiency, making Spanish speaking students the largest group of those identified as language minority students. The current state budget includes \$700,000 for each year of the biennium to help these students improve their English skills.

The Early Intervention program will provide \$3.7 million to eligible schools to establish and/or continue evidence-based early literacy intervention programs for students in pre-kindergarten through Grade 2. Since the creation of this grant in 1997, the program has provided professional development and literacy training for thousands of teachers and research-based programs for thousands of students.

Based on a recent resolution passed by the Indiana State Board of Education concerning mathematics standards for the Graduation Qualifying Examination (GQE), summer school mathematics classes necessary to prepare students for the 2004 GQE will receive priority funding in 2003 and 2004. These classes will be reimbursed at 100 percent of cost before funds are allocated to other classes.

For the 2001-02 school year, school corporations received an 83.5 percent reimbursement from the state for textbook expenses incurred for students who qualify for the federal free- and reduced-price meals program. Based on appropriations for the current biennium, a similar reimbursement rate should be available to school corporations.



The annual appropriation of \$5.8 million for the Gifted and Talented Grant will support school corporations in the development of local programs for high ability students. The funds will also support integrated services such as information resource centers and professional development.

The Technology Plan Grant Program appropriation will enable those school corporations with the lowest property tax wealth, and the least ability to use Capital Projects Fund dollars, to sustain and replenish their technology infrastructure. Approximately 50 districts will receive funding over the biennium to invest in computer hardware, software, connectivity and wiring.

External Factors

Local schools serve students who are at risk of academic failure due to a variety of factors, all of which require different support services. As these conditions change, the need for targeted support changes as well. For example, Indiana has recently experienced an increase in the number of residents originating from foreign countries. From 1989-90 to 2002-03 the number of English language minority students in Indiana has nearly tripled, from 15,769 students to 42,600. The number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students has quadrupled during that same time period. Today more than 200 native languages are spoken in Indiana schools.



Evaluation and Accomplishments

In 1997, when the Class of 2000 first took the Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE), 54 percent passed both parts of the test. At the end of the 1999-00 school year, after the expenditure of remediation dollars targeted toward this class, 86 percent had passed the GQE – a 69 percent increase. Similar results are evident for the classes of 2001 and 2002. Some 60,000 students have benefited from funding for the non-English speaking program, resulting in increased knowledge of English and opportunities for future success. Through the Early Intervention Grant, nearly 1,000 teachers have been trained to be reading recovery specialists for first graders. During the 2003-05 biennium more than 20,000 preschool through Grade 2 students will be assisted with their reading through targeted intervention and literacy programs.

